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SC SETS UP TASK FORCE TO ADDRESS RISING TREND OF STUDENT SUICIDES

The Supreme Court on Monday ordered a national task force to be formed under former SC judge S Ravindra Bhat to study rising student suicides

CULTURE OF NEGLECT IN INDIA'S EDU INSTITUTES

A bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan said when academic environments fail to address mental health concerns effectively, they contribute to a culture of neglect. The court took note of reports of ragging, academic pressure, caste discrimination, sexual harassment, etc., that were driving students to suicide due to the absence of institutional support | P10

STUDENTS FORM 7.6% OF SUICIDES REPORTED

- According to the 210th report of the Law Commission of India, suicide was identified as one of the most significant factors contributing to the premature and unnatural cessation of human life
- Student accounted for 7.6% of total suicides in India in 2022, with 1.2% attributable to career problems and 1.2% to exam failures

13,000

STUDENT SUICIDES REPORTED IN INDIA IN 2022 ALONE

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

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DEMOLITION JUSTICE AGAIN

Shiv Sena workers vandalise Habitat Studio in Khar, where Kunal Kamra had performed; (right) a bulldozer takes down the home of an accused in the Nagpur riot case | PTI

FIR against Kamra, lens on call data, bank account

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

Kunal Kamra

AN FIR has been filed against stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra for making defamatory remarks against Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde during a comedy show.

As part of the investigation, police will check Kamra's phone call records and freeze his bank account, said Maharashtra minister of state (Home) Yogesh Kadam. This comes after Kamra courted controversy on Sunday night when he uploaded a video of a standup comic piece he had performed at the Habitat Studio at the Unicontinental Hotel in Mumbai's Khar area.

In the 45-minute video, Kamra used a parody in which he referred to Shinde as a "traitor", sparking outrage from Shiv Sena workers.

As per police, Kamra used a modified version of a Hindi song to mock Shinde over his 2022 rebellion against then-Chief Minister and Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray. Within an hour of the video being uploaded, scores of Shiv Sena workers ransacked the property.

BMC officials said they razed a temporary structure in the open space of the hotel where the studio is located, for building violations. A BMC official said they have taken measurements of the studio to probe if it violates building rules.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis sought an apology from Kamra, stating that while the comic has the right to freedom of speech under the Constitution, he cannot insult leaders. "Kamra should read the Constitution ... where it is mentioned that you have freedom of speech, but it should not insult anyone. We demand an apology from Mr Kamra," he said.

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar distanced himself from the controversy, and said that there should be no pressure on the police during the investigation.

12 SENA WORKERS GRANTED BAIL

Mumbai: A local court granted bail to 12 workers of the Shiv Sena for ransacking the venue in Mumbai where Kamra made the 'traitor' jibe. The workers were arrested on Monday morning

House of prime accused in Nagpur riots razed

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

Fahim Khan

THE two-storey residence of Fahim Khan, an alleged mastermind behind the communal violence in Nagpur on March 17, was demolished on Monday by civic authorities who alleged it had been constructed in violation of norms.

Two days ago, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis had said the cost of properties damaged during the violence will be recovered from rioters and the failure to pay up would lead to seizure and selling the properties to recover losses.

The operation, which involved bulldozers and a heavy police presence assisted by drones, also saw the removal of an illegally constructed balcony at the house of another accused, Yusuf Sheikh, in the Mahal area.

Just hours after the demolition began, the Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court intervened, issuing a stay on the demolitions and criticising the administration for its "high-handedness."

A division bench comprising Justices Nitin Sambre and Vrushali Joshi questioned why the property owners were not given an opportunity for a hearing before the demolition of the building. The bench indicated that if determined that the demolition was conducted unlawfully, the authorities might be liable for damages.

Khan, a leader of the Minority Democratic Party (MDP), is currently in jail and facing charges of sedition in connection with the March 17 riots in Nagpur. The riots erupted after rumour about the burning of a 'chadar' featuring religious inscriptions during protests organised by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) demanding the removal of Aurangzeb's tomb in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar in central Maharashtra.

According to civic officials, prior to the demolition, Khan had received a notice citing multiple violations, including the lack of an approved plan.

HOUSE WAS BUILT ILLEGALLY: OFFICIAL

Nagpur: Civic body commissioner Harish Raut said they were acting on directives regarding the property illegally constructed on an expired lease from the Nagpur Improvement Trust

CASH ROW

SC Collegium recommends judge's transfer

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY & NAMITA BAJPAI @ New Delhi / Lucknow

THE Supreme Court on Monday confirmed the transfer of Delhi High Court judge Yashwant Varma, who is under scrutiny after a huge pile of cash was found at his official residence, to the Allahabad HC.

"The Supreme Court Collegium in its meetings held on March 20 and 24 has recommended the repatriation of Justice Yashwant Varma, Judge, High Court of Delhi, to the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad," read the Collegium's resolution, uploaded on the SC website on Monday.

The confirmation came amid stiff opposition from the Allahabad High Court Bar Association (HCBA), which said the high court is not a "dumping ground for corrupt and tainted judges". The HCBA called for the impeachment of Justice Varma and announced an indefinite strike from Tuesday against the Collegium's resolution.

The proposed transfer of Justice Varma, who has now been stripped of all the judicial responsibilities, will become effective if and when the Centre accepts the Collegium's recommendation.

The HCBA also demanded registration of an FIR and probe by the CBI and ED against the judge, who has denied all the allegations against him claiming the whole affair was a conspiracy to tarnish his image. The association said Justice Varma's past judgments need to be reviewed to safeguard the integrity of the judiciary. It also called for an overhaul of the Collegium system saying the current practice of appointing judges lacks transparency.

Meanwhile, a three-member probe panel set up by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna is looking into the allegations against Justice Varma. The probe panel comprises Justice Sheel Nagu, Chief Justice of the Punjab & Haryana High Court; Justice Gurmeet Singh Sandhawalia, Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court; and Justice Anu Sivaraman, Judge of the Karnataka High Court.

While dousing a fire at Justice Varma's Delhi residence on March 14, firefighters found a huge quantity of partially burnt currency notes. The judge was not at home when the incident took place.

Unanswered questions

SEVERAL CRUCIAL POINTS ARE MISSING IN THE CASH-AT-JUDGE'S-HOME STORY. HERE'S A LOOK:

1. Who ordered the removal of debris from the scene on March 15 morning. Where is the debris now?
2. According to reports, half-burnt sacks containing cash were seen. Then why wasn't the scene sealed immediately?
3. Delhi HC CJ's aide reported seeing debris on March 15 night. How is it possible if it was removed in the morning?
4. A video showing burnt currency notes has gone viral. Has the device on which it was recorded been recovered?

Will take action against BJP for distorting my statement: DKS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

DEPUTY Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Monday said that he will initiate legal action against BJP for distorting his statement on 4% reservation to Muslims in contracts for government civil works.

His statement during an interview with a TV channel on Sunday led to a controversy with Union Minister JP Nadda raising it in the Rajya Sabha on Monday and seeking a clarification from Leader of Opposition and AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge.

The BJP leadership stated that Shivakumar had only expressed the Congress' stand of changing the Constitution in favour of Muslims.

Shivakumar said that he will initiate legal action against those who had launched a disinformation campaign against him. "I never said we will change the Constitution. It is BJP's propaganda. I will take legal action against those twisting my statement. It will be difficult to initiate action if such statements are made in the House. But he will surely take action if they are made outside the Parliament," he said.

"All that I said was there is precedence of changing the Constitution based on the court orders. Congress is a national party which brought the Constitution in the first place. We understand the importance of the Constitution better than others. The Centre has failed the people in its recent budget, and hence, it is trying to rake up issues such as this one," he said.

He accused BJP leader Amit Malviya of misleading the nation. "Let them show proof of me saying that the Constitution needs to be changed. This is cheap politics from the BJP. They don't get sleep if they don't take the name of Sonia Gandhi, her family and the Congress party. BJP is an expert in falsifying information and spreading it," he said. P4,9

B'gavi horror: Couple set to wed kills newborn, throws body in garbage bin

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Belagavi

POLICE have arrested a young couple on charges of killing a newborn and dumping the body into a garbage bin at Ambadgatti village in Belagavi district on March 5. Mahabalesh Kamoji, 31, and Simran alias Muskan, 22, both from Ambadgatti near Kittur, were in a relationship for three years and wanted to get married soon.

However, Simran got pregnant and gave birth to a baby on March 5.

According to Superintendent of Police Bhimashankar Guled, nobody in Simran's family knew that she was pregnant. Simran, who went into labour, gave birth to the baby in the bathroom.

Simran was on a video call with Mahabalesh when she gave birth to the baby. Later, they decided to kill the baby and dispose of the body away from their house as they did not want their families to know this.

Accordingly, Mahabalesh and Simran killed the baby and dumped the body into the garbage bin near Ambadgatti the day it was born. After a few days, some residents of Ambadgatti found the infant's body in the garbage bin and alerted the police.

After two weeks of investigation, a police team found that the infant's parents were Simran and Mahabalesh and arrested them.

According to sources, Simran used to watch videos on her mobile phone of women giving birth to babies without anybody's help.

After gaining confidence, Simran decided not to go to any hospital or seek any help from local midwives, and give birth to the baby herself at home.

Meanwhile, the police said that Mahabalesh and Simran confessed to the crime during interrogation.

A case under Section 94 of BNS was registered against them.

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>
> -Sources

EXPRESS READ

TN MPs will meet PM for fair delimitation process, says Stalin

Chennai: Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin on Monday announced that a delegation of 39 MPs from the state would soon call on PM Modi to press for a fair delimitation of Lok Sabha seats. It is to retrieve the rights of Tamil Nadu, and that of similarly placed other states by taking forward the "Tamil Nadu will fight, Tamil Nadu will win" slogan, the CM said | P5

24% pay hike for MPs: Salary, daily allowances and pensions revised

New Delhi: The Centre announced a 24% salary hike for Members of Parliament, effective April 1, 2023, raising their monthly salary to ₹1.24 lakh, with additional allowances and perks. The daily allowance has been increased from ₹2,000 to ₹2,500, applicable while attending Parliament sessions and committee meetings | P9

Rahul Brit or Indian? Or both? Govt call in 4 weeks

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

THE Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court on Monday granted the Central government a month's time to take a decision regarding the status of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's 'dual citizenship'.

A PIL by BJP worker S Vignesh Shishir based in Karnataka sought cancellation of Rahul's citizenship owing to his alleged concealment of his British citizenship.

Deputy Solicitor General of India Surya Bhan Pandey, representing the Centre, requested the division bench comprising Justice Attau Rehman Masoodi and Justice Ajai Kumar Srivastava for two months to make a decision on Rahul's citizenship, but the bench directed that the matter be listed in the week commencing April 21 for the next hearing.

Vignesh's counsel told the court his client had presented a detailed representation-cum-complaint to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, asking for the cancellation of Rahul's Indian citizenship.

The petitioner had sent emails to the UK government seeking details about Rahul's citizenship records. He learnt that UK had already received a similar request from one VSS Sarma (respondent no. 14) in 2022.

Vignesh then approached Sarma who agreed to share the confidential emails of the UK government which hinted at Rahul's British nationality. The plea added that in the email, the UK government stated that it could not provide information about Rahul Gandhi unless it got a letter of authority from him (Rahul).

The PIL alleged that the email of the UK government was an outright admission of Rahul's British nationality.